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Texas Honored for Innovative System for Permitting and Routing Oversize/Overweight Trucks

The Intelligent Transportation Society of America (ITS America) today honored the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (TxDMV) and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) with a *Smart Solution Spotlight* award for a new Webbased tool that allows motor carriers to self-issue the permits and routes they need to move oversize and overweight loads on the state's highway system.

The award honors companies and organizations for using innovative technology – known as Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) – to create a safer, cleaner, more efficient and sustainable transportation system. The Texas Permitting and Routing Optimization System (TxPROS) earned the award in recognition of its use of "smart" technology to improve service, save time and resources, and keep loads and motorists safe.

"This recognition is a testament to our commitment to customer service, safety and efficiency," said TxDMV Executive Director Whitney Brewster.

"TxPROS is an innovative tool that promotes safety and efficiency for people moving goods through Texas," said Phil Wilson, TxDOT executive director. "TxPROS reflects the strong partnership and collaborative effort between state government and the motor carrier industry that benefits all Texans."

Trucks that move loads that are taller, longer, wider or heavier than legal limits must get a permit and – for many loads – a route from the TxDMV. An accurate route avoids obstacles, such as an overpass that is too low, or bridges and pavement that could be damaged by the load. TxPROS is the first system to generate a route along with a map and turn-by-turn driving instructions customized to the size and weight of the load in "real time" using GIS.

TxPROS allows trucking companies to apply for oversize/overweight permits, pay the fees and route their trucks on the best roads for a load's size and weight, all online, 24/7. Before TxPROS, permit specialists processed applications during business hours only and manually routed loads using paper maps. A truck loaded and ready to go in the middle of the night might have waited hours or even days for a permit and route. For most permit types a company can now apply, pay, print and go in minutes.

The system is the first of its kind in the nation and so easy to use that customers have self-issued more than half of all permits since its launch in August 2011. TxPROS cost \$1.6 million and took four years of work with a software developer and coordination with the motor carrier industry. A recent survey shows that 96 percent of customers say TxPROS has benefitted their business.

"TxPROS perfects the use of the latest in database and Web technology, GIS data and real-time information to totally streamline a manual process that was labor intensive and not very cost effective," said Scott Belcher, ITS America's president and CEO. "This investment in technology is already yielding remarkable results for the state and its customers—we hope to see it replicated throughout the country."

While the project was developed under TxDOT, the state legislature transferred the size and weight program and its staff to TxDMV as of Jan. 1. The two agencies continue to coordinate closely because of overlapping responsibilities in routing oversize/overweight cargo.

"Trucks and equipment don't sit idle, and cargo moves quicker for shippers and receivers. This helps their businesses run more efficiently," said Carol Davis, Texas Oversize/Overweight Permit Program director.

TxPROS also tracks oversize/overweight traffic by roadway segment to help TxDOT accurately forecast maintenance, design and funding needs. TxPROS will reduce damage to highway infrastructure long term and also will add funds to highway maintenance during a time when other sources of revenue have shrunk.

TxPROS was introduced just in time to handle a surge in permit activity. Although Fiscal Year 2011 set a record of 590,980 permits issued, activity is up more than 23 percent for Fiscal Year 2012.

The ITS America Smart Solution Spotlight award is presented to projects that have made a true impact to improve safety, enhance mobility and recognizes the best and most innovative uses of ITS to create a safe, efficient and sustainable transportation system while still meeting increased customer needs.

For more information on TxPROS, please visit www.TxDMV.gov.

The Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (TxDMV) is charged with overseeing the state's motor vehicle services that provide consumer protection, assist motor vehicle-related businesses and raise revenue for the state. For every \$1 it spends, the TxDMV returns \$10 to build and maintain highways, roads and bridges and provide needed services to Texans. Each year the agency registers almost 22 million vehicles; regulates vehicle dealers; credentials buses and big trucks for intrastate and interstate commerce; issues oversize and overweight permits; and awards grants to law enforcement agencies to reduce vehicle burglaries and thefts. Learn more at www.TxDMV.gov.

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